

# 1988 VOLUME 7 ISSUE 3



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#### SCIENCE FAIR '88

S.T.A.T.U.S. PRESENTS A SPECIAL AWARD By Robert S. Eure, Special Awards Committee Chairman

The 37th Annual Tidewater Science Fair was held March 26, 1988 at Deep Creek High School in Chesapeake, Virginia. This fair includes junior and senior divisions representing many specific subject areas of science from behavioral sciences to zoology. In an effort to promote computer education and literacy as encouraged by our charter, we have awarded a monetary award to a Computer Science participant in the Semior Division for the last three years.

This year, there were seven projects displayed in the Computer Science Senior Division. Each of the seven projects had some merits, but one project stood above the rest, demonstrating the concept of computer learning with the use of artificial intelligence. The demonstration and program were developed by Paul Colton, a student at Menchville High in Newport News, using an Amiga Computer System. This project allowed anyone to teach the computer by drawing geometric shapes such as circles, triangles, squares and such and entering the shape's name to the database in the 'learn' mode. The shape's mathematical equivalent and name were stored to the computer's memory. In the 'test' mode, anyone could redraw the shapes on the drawing pad and the computer would display a first and second choice identification of the shape's name. The accuracy of correct guesses by the computer exceeded 89 percent in 300 tests.

8.T.A.T.U.8. President, Mr. Buck Maddrey, awarded Mr. Paul Colton a check in the amount of \$75.90 during the Awards Assembly. The judges for the Special Award were S.T.A.T.U.S. members Robert Eure, Buck Maddrey and Don Marshall. I consider this newly established tradition to be very worthwhile, and as Chairman of the Special Awards Committee, I extend a warm thanks to all who contributed to this project.

### DRIVE CONVERSION

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By John Hissink (783)788-6263 Jan '88 REACH Newsletter Edmonton Atari Computer Hobbyists, Alberta, Canada Retyped for SNL by Gene Rodriguez

The single sided Atari SF354 disk drive can be converted to a double-sided drive for \$94. It is completely equivalent to the SF314 except that it uses less power. The SF354 contains an Epson SMB138 drive and the SF314 contains an Epson 148 drive. In addition, both drives contain a connector board at the rear of the drive housing which interfaces the Atari cables to the headed sockets which plug into the Epson drive. The boards also have jumper wires which tell the 5285T what type of drive is

connected. The cases for both drives are identical except for the SF354/SF314 earking on the outside.

There are eight Epson SHD-100 series disk drives, the SHD-130 and SMD-170 are interchangeable single sided drives. Sieilarly, the SMD-140 and SMD-180 are interchangeable double sided drives. The diffrence is that the SMD-130 and SMD-140 are intended for AC powered equipment and consume 1.30 on standby and 6.90 on read/write. The SMD-170 and SMD-180 are designed for use with both AC and battery powered equipment and use 0.30 on standby and 2.90 on read/write. A good source for Epson SMD-180 drive is:

Halted Specialties Co. Inc. 827 E. Evelyn Ave. Sunnyvale, CA 94886 TEL.(488)732-1573

The cost is \$89 plus \$5 shipping. They accept phone orders using a credit card and ship via UPS. Since the cost of an SF314 is about \$219 the conversion results in a considerable saving. The only problem is what do you do with the old single sided drive? To convert the drive, proceed as follows:

- 1. Remove the four screws around the perimeter of the SF354 disk drive and gently lift the rear cover while lightly pressing in the disk connector sockets at the rear. The sockets and switch should pop free and the top can be unhooked froe the active LED and disk eject switch at the front.
- 2. Carefully unplug the two socket connectors between the interface board

and the rear of the SMD-130. Use a small, flat bladed screwdriver to gently and evenly pry them free. Looking at the top of the board in the lower left-hand corner is a place for a jumper wire marked W1 between locations S8 and F8. Connect a piece of wire between these points and solder it in place. Turn the board over and rotate 180 degrees. Find the four parallel jumper wires on the right hand side. Remove the first and third wires, either by cutting them away or unsoldering them. This completes the modification to this board.

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}	ı Wi			1
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1	0 F8-			1

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0		0		0		0	1
X	L	1		X	L	1	1
X	2	1		X	1	1	1
0		0		0		0	1
2		4		2		4	1

## bottom

- 3. At this point, you have to decide how functional you want the drive active LED to be. You will probably have noticed the the disk active LED is on the left front on the SMD-18B and on the right front on the SMD-13B. You have three choices.
- a.) Forget about it and use the ears to tell you when the drive is active;

- b.) Drill a small hole through the plastic front at the location of the SMD-180 LED;
- c.) Unsolder the LED on the SMD-180, extend it on wires to the SMD-130 location and epoxy it in place behind the old LED window. I used clear epoxy with a small piece of silver foil as a reflector to achieve sufficient LED brilliance. I did not change LEDs as I suspect the SMD-180 LED has a far lower driving current. To remove the LED. I had to remove the two screws holding the board, the two cables plugged in by the stepper motor, tilt the board up and use a solder sucker to get it out. if you're willing to do this. you don't need further instructions!
- 4. Remove the three screws on the bottom of the disk drive case and lift off the SMD-138. Remove the two screws holding on the RFI shield and slide it off to the rear. Now slide it onto the new drive and put the two screws back in place. Use a small phillips screw driver (about 1/8") to loosen the two screws holding on the plastic disk case front from the SMD-130. They are accessable from the top looking vertically straight down just behind the plastic front. Once the screws are completely free, gently lift the plastic front off the SMD-138 taking the screws along. Look behind the eject button and note that it is attached by two plastic hooks through a rectangular hole in the metal eject lever. Very gently compress the two plastic clips together, remove the plastic knob and push into the hole on the SMD-180 eject lever. Install the plastic drive front

on the SND-180 by reversing the removal procedure. Screw the SMB-180 onto the case bottom using the three retaining screws. Be careful to position it as far forward as possible so that the plastic front touches the lip on the case bottom.

5. Plug the two connectors from the interface board into the rear of the SMD-188, hook the top cover over the LED and eject button and lower the rear over the interface board. Once in place, do up the four screws on the bottom and the SF354 is now an SF314.

Our thanks for the use of this article, to the Edmonton Atari Computer Hobbyists

### **SX212 MODIFICATION**

The SX-212 Upgrade
(Or, The Switches Atari Forgot)
By Ian McLaughlin, Kelowna, B.C.
(Reprinted from the Puget Sound Atari
News, March 1988)
Retyped for SML by Dick Litchfield

The SX-212 modem is, in my mind, the most useful peripheral Atari Corp. has ever released. Unfortunately, there have been many problems with it: the worst problem was with the early models—they couldn't call long distance because there was some problem with the unit not being able to pick up a weak carrier. People who have tried to use this modem with the Dasis BBS program will also have noticed a problem regarding the auto-answer facility. The Hayes<sup>TM</sup> standard is to have Auto-Answer

on as a default. Atari decided this was not a good idea, so they decided that Auto-Answer should default to off in the SX-212.

The purpose of this article is to show you how to modify your SX-212 to overcome some of the problems regarding Atari's default settings. I believe that now is a good time to stress that doing this modification to your SX-212 modem will void any warranty. Also you should not attempt this unless you have experience with soldering and desoldering. There, now that the disclaimers are out of the way, we should be able to continue.

If you open up you SX-212 (most people who like tinkering have probably already done this by now!) and remove the metal shield (Atari likes using these things) to expose the PCB, you will notice a place on the board marked SW2. This looked very such like a position for a dip-switch to me, so I decided to experiment. What I found was quite amazing. You will notice that there are four resistor-like things soldered in here (Between pins 3-14. 4-13, 5-12, and 6-11 of SW2). Examining these. I found they were marked with a single black band. Pulling out my resistor colour-code chart, I deduced that they were zero-ohe resistors! Now. really useful. In other words they are regular links (no different from a piece of wire, except probably a lot more expensive). Your SX-212 might only have regular wire here - not to worry.

In order to perform this

modification, you should remove these resistor/links. Use a solder sipper to clean out the 16 holes in this area. Now solder in an 8-way SPST dip-switch (Radio Shack #275-1301) in this position, making sure that switch number 1 is oriented with pin number 1 on the board. That's it! You now have greater control over your modes. Below you will find a description of what each switch does. (Well, not all of them, I couldn't work out what they all did. but I'm sure someone will tell me!) The asterisks in the table denote the original defaults, just in case you want to return your modem back to it's original condition. Well, that's it. You now have a modem with more options at a smaller price than most other Haves-compatible modems.

## SX-212 Dip-Switch Settings:

Switch Description					
1		Word result codes			
	on	Digit result codes			
2	+off	Echo on			
	on	Echo off			
3	off	Auto-answer enable (Sets S0 to 1)			
	#OR	Auto-answer disable (Sets S0 to 0)			
4	off	Off hook			
	*on	On hook			
5	off	Result code not displayed			
	#on	Result code displayed			

#### REPAIR TOOLKIT

disable The Eight-Bit Toolkit, MAY,1988
Intelligent mode By Bob Momack for STATUS
enable

What's in your utility toolkit?
...Toolkit? Why do I need a toolkit?
There are two good uses for tools: They help you fix something which is broken and they help you make something which is working achieve meak performance.

Having said that, let's take a peek inside a well-stocked public domain utility toolkit to see what's there. Let's begin with disk repair. Have you ever gotten an error 164 "file number mismatch"? How about an error 162 "disk full" on a half-full disk. Funny things happen when you run public-domain software and some of the un-funniest are disk crashes caused by improper or illegal disk access. Atari issued DISKFIX.COM on their DOS 2.5 master disk to handle problems like this, and handle them it does. Unfortunately, it does this by irretrievably erasing the contents and directory entries of ALL defective files on the disk indiscriminately. If all else fails, run it. But don't be surprised if files you thought were fine get zapped away forever! But before you wallop away with the twenty-ounce hammer, why not try a soft rubber mallet to gently re-shape your problem items?

For Atari DOS 2.8 and 2.5 users, this comes in the form of DISKMASTER, a binary disk and sector editor. With the help of its exhaustive instructions you

6	off	Intelligent	node
		disable	
	#on	Intelligent	aode

7 #off BELL tones (North America) on CCITT tones(Europe)

8 \*off ??? on ???

#### STATUS PICNIC

----

Yes we're gonna do it again! We received so many RAVE reviews about last years event, we have decided to have a repeat performance. Reportedly, the only ones not enjoying our last picnic were the pigs.

The Third Annual Status Family Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, June 18,1988, from 11:00am til sunset at Bayville Park in Virginia Beach. We have reserved pavillion \$3 again for this years get together....its the one closest to the Frisbee golf course.

The menu will consist of the infamous 'status bbq', boiled potatoes, slaw, burgers, and hot dogs, with all the fixins', and, a special dessert. We will have plenty of soft drinks and activities for young and old alike.

We are all looking forward to this years picnic, and to the fellowship this opportunity presents.

can repair the directory, VTOC, boot sectors, or data sectors of an ailing disk. It's a good learning tool too!

Let's see now, what other chores are there? ....

Next time you have a computer field day, how about condensing those forty-odd, half-used disks into twenty-odd FULL disks and freeing up twenty? Here are just the fragusses to do it too: COPYPLUS is a batch file copier, meaning it allows you to tag a group of files on one disk and move them as a group to another disk, with pushing and little button disk-swapping as possible. Lots of features and a detailed Doc too! MULTICOPY does the same job but allows you to input your choices by joystick envesents.

How about whole disk copies? MYCOPYR version 2.8 (file) or 2.1 (boot disk), by Blenn Smith, takes advantage of most RAM extension formats to give you ultra-quick copies of your disks in all single-sided formats including 1858 dual density and true double density. It supports SpartaBOS ultra-speed and Happy warp-speed, and includes a thorough Doc.

Now that you are all organized, how are you going to keep track of all your files? ...CATALOB, a new (Jan. '88) disk/file database program. It's in BASIC, but don't let that fool you. It's quick!

Have you ever had a BASIC program which you could RUN but couldn't LIST? This type of program can't even be RUN in Turbo-BASIC. Have you ever had one with a damaged variable table? REPAIR

1.5 is just the ticket to uncover and repair BASIC variable tables.

If you have ever tried to De-ARC a program only to find isn't ARC'ed, but is compacted in some other way (but which one) you'll want to try CHECK5. This little gem tells you which compaction method was used on a file from amongst the five most widely-used compactors. Another program along the same lines is DETECT. Between these two programs, just about every kind of Atari file compactor is checked for.

So, why not pick up these neat special purpose tools for your software toolbox? You can pick them up from your user group's library or BBS. It sure beats thrashing about on all your jobs with nothing but a twenty-ounce hammer!

## SOFTWARE REVIEW

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Breach
By Gene Rodriguez III

ST/Color Only Omnitrend Software, Inc. PO Box 733 West Simsbury, CT 06092

The Benre

Breach is the latest addition to the field of personnel-level strategy/war games. It stems from the same family tree as Avalon Hill's "Squad Leader", and owes more than a

### Synopsis

In Breach, you play the role of a Squad Leader who is given various assignments against the enemy (in this case, the United Democratic Planets). The assignments may range from kidnap/rescue to search & destroy, and all assignments may have multiple victory conditions that must be met before an assignment may be called successful. The size of your squad may go from one to twenty, depending on the scenario, with most squads averaging in the 7-18 range.

Terrain varies widely; from the depths of tropical jungles, to the interior of starships, to dank, maze-like caverns. The graphics at this and many other points are done quite well... you won't have any trouble telling a tree from an airlock. Another aspect of the interiors are the "set decorations": tables, chairs, computers and terminals, machinery... all can be found in any given building or scenario.

Nandering around the pretty

scenery is far from the extent of this page... Breach contains more than it's fair share of fiendish villains. Marines, Aliens, Beasts, Overlords, Robots, and Autoguns all vie for the right to blast you into random pixels. and all have more than enough ability and firenower to get the job done. Note to Denitrend: the Overlord looks WAY too much like Darth Vader... give him a new costume, or lose him. This is not to say that you are without your own little arsenal: you come equipped with a handy little blaster, and can also grenades, rockets launchers, shields, demo packs, grav belts... and the list goes on.

Breach makes good use of the mouse, invoking dialogue buttons, drop-down menus, and a pointer that changes shape to fit various circumstances. This astute use of the screen means you seldom have to touch the keyboard in the course of the game, which serves the dual purpose of making the game easy to play, and less demanding in terms of command memorization.

## Negatives

Although Breach is a very good game, it does have a few weak spots....First let's look at your character, the Squad Leader. Although Denitrend provides you the means to edit other marines through the Scenario Builder (more on that later), it provides no way for you to "help out" your own character. Now, while that is in keeping with the reality of the game

(in real life, we all can't run down to DEXTERITY-R-US and pick up a couple of extra Dex points) it doesn't help your lowly character survive his first mission.

When your leader is first created, his stats are low... VERY LOW... like only a 20% chance of hitting something with his trusty blaster. The problem with this arises when you go into battle and lead a squad containing men (in your command) with ratings of 75% or greater! That's about as realistic (and as potentially fun) as having Don Knotts lead Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson, and Sylvester Stalone into battle.

Another problem, although not limited to Denitrend software, is the fact that Breach runs only in low resolution. As a forser owner of a annochrose annitor (we're now a two monitor family) I know how frustrating it is to try and find entertainment software that is mono compatible. The only reason I point it out in this instance, is the fact that Breach is available for the Macintosh... come on guys, you've got the monochrome experience, why not provide the "other half" with versions of your software! I'm sure mono users would be willing to spend an extra \$5.00 or \$10.00 under the pretense of an upgrade. It's worth a trv.

Finally, (and this is getting picky) I've got to comment on the packaging: it's tacky. The light cardboard wrap-around cover just

doesn't stand up to wear and tear. The copy I purchased was dog-eared and rather sad looking... it doesn't ship well, it doesn't look all that hot, and it won't store very well. How about a sturdy little cardboard box, Omnitrend? Your retailers will thank you for it.

On The Other Hand...

Other than the critique about character stats, by negative comments are all pretty superficial, the reason for that is Breach is an above average game. Playability, execution, concept... all are sound and well worth the price of admission. The crowning glory to all this is the fact that Breach comes with a Scenario Builder that allows you to create your own scenarios and combat situations!

I've reached the stage in my software buying where I refuse to purchase entertainment software that doesn't have some sort of "Construction Set/Norld Builder". Think about it for a minute, at the prices most software houses charge for a game, the LEAST they can do is give you the option to change or rearrange the game/playing field at your leisure. Mean18 has this and so does Empire, and I think both pages are better for it. A call on any given day to SEnie (or even the STATUS BBS) will usually yield at least one or two new courses or worlds for future enjoyment.

The Scenario Builder in Breach is the equal to others I've used, and in some cases superior. All of the terrain and set decorations are available for placement, you can set victory conditions, number and location of enemy units, and even a brief "dossier" of the scenario and what to expect. One addition to this separate program I'd like to see, is the ability to edit objects and enemies... the ability to create a "Tereinator" enemy, or alien plant life could only improve the scenario building cycle.

The Verdict ...

If you haven't already guessed, I'm recommending Breach. I'm already a big fan of the game (even though my squad Leader STILL can't hit the side of a starship). My criticisms are minor, and could well be taken care of by the time Breach 2.8 hits the stands... soon I hope!

## PRINTOUT GAPS

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By Don Soward

I've noticed that a few of the programs that dump graphics to the printer leave horozontal gaps during printout. Benerally this isn't any big deal, except when the finished product is a cassette label, and it doesn't fit, or the graphic for your Print Shop card is too large, or your Koala masterpiece won't fit on a single sheet.

A clue to to one of the solutions came from the March '88 issue of Antic

Magazine. The 'Adventure Creation Kit' will dump the game map to the printer. It uses a line spacing of '8', (8/72). But adjusting this fine line spacing to '6', results in a much smoother printout.

On my Okidata Microline 182, this code does nothing until you set that spacing with: CHR\$(27), 2. Try it if your print-outs don't fit!

Eds note: if you have discovered any other solutions for this problem, please leave me 'E-Mail' on the Status BBS or U/L it to me care of 'N' (Newsletter).

#### PC DISEASE?

MARMING: COMPUTER A.I.D.S. AT WORK by Bill Pike, PAC Retyped for SNL by Bob Womack

Well, we knew it was coming sooner or later! It is here now! Some Phbreakers are circulating a VIRUS program thru BBSs. There is also a virus program that came out of Europe and is causing much havor there. The program is encoded in some nice looking, popular programs. These are probably a innocent programs that may have been around for awhile, the Phbreakers are too lazy and/or stupid to write something new, other than trying to upgrade the virus section of a program, themselves. The original program may run fine, HOWEVER, when the file has been loaded or run, the virus writes a program to the disk. The virus sits inside the computer memory and Input/Output for a disk operation. Each time a disk is placed in the drive and a Input/Output opeartion is performed a copy of the virus is written to the disk. If a file containing the virus is transferred to a BBS the virus goes along with the program. This virus then sits in wait on the disk, no it isn't listed in the directory and may or may not change the VTOC. At some predetermined later time the virus opes to work and may wipe out the directory and VTOC or it just might FORMAT the entire disk. Some virus programs modify DOS so that the virus program is appended to EVERY file on the disk when a file is loaded off of the disk or transfered via modes.

You can easily see that your whole library of programs could be rendered infected and then gone. In the meantime you could have been a innocent carrier of the virus infecting your friends and others. That is why the name of the article is COMPUTER A.I.D.S. There are ways of protecting yourself and others as well as cleaning out any existing virus programs that you may have picked up.

ATARI owners have a big advantage over other types of computers in that the disk drive is a smart-drive, seaning if the disk is write protected the drive WILL NOT write to or format that disk. This is part of the ROM instructions within the drive itself and a virus cannot modify ROM. However there is a modification available to bypass this feature. I would suggest

that it be removed for obvious reasons.

Keeping the virus out of your library is much easier than removing it when it already exists. You can never be sure that you have caught every disk the virus has infected and if you don't get all infected disks it will just spread again. Now to the cures:

- \$1. WRITE PROTECT your disks that are not supposed to be written to. If you want to write to a disk of this type you can always remove the tab and replace it when you are done.
- \$2. The virus cannot survive a COLDSTART. Re-boot the computer each time with a KNOWN GOOD DOS disk after switching the computer off then back on. If you are using a BOOT disk make a copy of the original disk, archive the original and boot from the direct copy, then reserve any other disks that may be written to by the program as possible INFECTED. Don't use these disks for any other purpose! NEVER use your archive disk for any purpose other than to make a copy for your working disk. You might also write protect your working copy, if possible.

\$3. Here is a rather long one for those who trade programs or down load programs from BBSs. Keep your downloads or trades on a separate disk. Then load and run each program, make sure you don't use the original or working copy of any program that the file works with, use a test copy. After you have run each program, format a blank disk, using a known good copy of DOS. Then use a sector editor to check the first 4 sectors (8-3) of the disk of the

suspect disk against the freshly formatted disk. If these don't match, one of the files on the disk was a virus. You can find the file by using a known good DOS and copying each file individually to another disk, then running that file and comparing the boot sectors (0-3) to the formatted disk. You might also wish to compare all file lengths including the DOS.9YS and DUP.SYS files. If any file is longer than the original file, suspect a virus.

There are a couple of ANTIBIOTIC programs going around that can usually detect a virus infected file. However, as the Phbreakers get their hands on the antibiotics, they will find a way around them, so don't trust them totally.

This article has been written from the 8-bit view point. However the same principles apply to the ST.

In conclusion, always suspect Henu programs and ANY pirated program. Also suspect programs that work with with popular programs. All purchased disks are write protected and a error in writing could be trapped so you wouldn't see it happen if the error occured during the booting of the program, as the drive is already running. However, if the disk wasn't write protected the program would write the virus. This would obviously include broken programs and boot disks made into files. Anyone could sabotage a disk or file at anytime.

(Eds Note:) This of course is just a

fad, and probably started as a joke. But. in my opinion, it is a crime, and not a joking matter! It is surely an invasion of privacy, destroying of personal property and a downright waste of programming talent. Liken it if you will to a visitor placing a concealed time bomb in your house, due to explode at some future date or event. Or, maybe a mechanic programming your automobile computer to render the ignition system inoperable after xnueber of starts. It behoves oe to think that an individual. or group of individuals, could get enjoyment out of such dastardly acts. Suppose an individual, knowingly or not, uploaded an infected file to GEnie, during the process of testing and posting the entire library became infected, with eventual system crash and infection of every one of the systems users.....it could happen. Shouldn't the parties responsible for these virus programs be brought to court, and prosecuted to the full extent of the law without leniency for being demented?

## MEETING DATES

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MAY 5- Business

MAY 12- SIG Nite

MAY 19- General MAY 26- Exec Comm.

JUNE 2- Business

JUNE 9- SIS Nite

JUNE 16- Beneral

JUNE 18- CLUB PICNIC!



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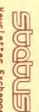
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Meetings: STATUS meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of the month at the 7-UP Bottling Company, 5700 Ward Avenue, in Virginia Beach at 7:30 p.m. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

Newsletter Articles:

Submitted articles are preferred as disk text files, but will be greatfully accepted as hard copy (including handwriting) if you do not have a disk drive. If you have a modem, you can upload your articles to the Editor by calling the STATUS BBS at 495-3905. Articles may be submitted at any time, but will probably not make that month's Newsletter if submitted less than one week prior to the first meeting of the month.



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